

# THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTION IN ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE

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## ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of organizational members' expressed emotions. We consider expressive behaviors that serve as a form of communication between senders ("role occupants") and receivers ("target persons"). First, we introduce a framework that specifies how norms and characteristics of role occupants influence the content, intensity, and diversity of displayed emotions at the role occupant level of analysis. Second, we propose that the emotions expressed by a role occupant in a given transaction may be refined in response to two other—more transient—influences: transaction-defining cues and feedback from the target person. Transaction-defining cues are features of the target person (e.g., gender) and of the setting (e.g., pace) that influence emotions displayed at the outset of a transaction. Feedback from the target person that emerges during the transaction can cause the role occupant further to modify his or her expressive behavior. Third, we consider how expressed emotions influence the behavior of target persons. We demonstrate how role occupants' displayed emotions can bring about both preferred and unwanted changes in others.

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter is not about how people feel on the job. Nor is it about how they say they feel. Organizational researchers have considered such topics extensively, especially in studies of job satisfaction and the effects of job stress. We examine, rather, the feelings that people display on the job. Why is it important to distinguish between experienced and expressed emotions? Because there is no simple match between the emotions that organizational members feel and the emotions they learn to express (Gordon, 1981). When a food server at McDonald's smiles at you, is it because he or she likes you? Not necessarily. Experimental psychologists have confirmed that people can present facial expressions that are inconsistent with their internal feelings (Ekman & Oster, 1979; Mehrabian, 1971). This ability to exercise cognitive control means that organizational members can follow formal and informal expectations that they display certain emotions and that the sentiments they express may be unrelated to, or even in conflict with, their so-called true feelings.

Some people have jobs in which explicit organizational rules require them to express certain emotions no matter how they "really" feel. Mary Kay Ash, the founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, expects her beauty consultants to take a "Vow of Enthusiasm" and to sing a company song, "I've got that Mary Kay Enthusiasm." Indeed, Mary Kay teaches her beauty consultants to offer fake enthusiasm to customers when they don't feel genuine enthusiasm (Ash, 1984). In contrast, other jobs require people to express nasty feelings, even if they don't feel nasty. For example, an investigator whose work entailed interrogating suspected felons told us, "They pay me to be mean."

Clients or customers may influence which emotions are expressed by people in service jobs. Rafaeli (1988), for example, carried out a participant-observation study in which she worked as a cashier in an Israeli supermarket. Customers taught her—inadvertently—about the presence of norms against acting friendly, even if she felt friendly; her good cheer was interpreted as a sign of inexperience. One customer told her, "I can tell that you are new. No one here smiles or is as friendly as you."

Studying the expression of emotion in organizational life is important because such behaviors may have potent effects on other people. In Frijda's (1986) words, an expressive behavior can be defined as an act that "establishes or enhances, weakens or breaks, some form of contact with some aspect of the environment or that aims at doing so or is accessory in doing so" (p. 13). Along these lines, we have argued elsewhere (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) that emotions expressed by employees may act as "control moves" (Goffman, 1959) that influence the behavior of people who are the targets of displayed feelings. This view is consistent with recent popular writings, including Peters and Austin's (1985) *Passion for Excellence*; they argue that friendly employees can attract

customers and encourage them to spend more money. Such writings also suggest that employees who are rude, surely, or unenthusiastic can drive customers away.

The Southland Corporation, which owns or franchises approximately 7,500 7/Eleven stores in North America, has followed strongly in the spirit of such writings. In 1986, the corporation sponsored the "Thanks a Million" contest. Owners and managers of 7/Eleven stores could qualify to enter a drawing for a million dollars if their subordinates consistently offered good cheer to customers.

In other settings, the display of negative emotions by employees may bring about organizational gains. Police interrogators glare at suspects and shout at them in order to stimulate confessions (Arther & Caputo, 1959). Bill collectors use negative and esteem-degrading emotions in order to coerce debtors into paying their bills (Hochschild, 1983).

Furthermore, emotions expressed between members of the same organization may influence one another. Employees who want to maintain good relations with each other know that they must at least feign friendliness. Howe (1977) interviewed a waitress who described some ways in which such friendliness may enable employees to get what they want:

The waitresses have to be nice to the bartenders because we need our drinks fast. The bartender has to be nice to us because if our customers complain it is his fault. The cooks are the least dependent on others, but they have to be nice to the waitresses to get the secret drinks we bring them from the bar (p. 100).

In short, the expression of emotion in organizational life is important to study because there is no simple relationship between employees' real feelings on the job and the feelings they present to others. Moreover, expressed emotions may have potent effects on the behavior, as well as the cognitions and attitudes, of people who are the targets of such expressions.

The power of expressed emotions to bring about organizational gains is also important to study because some common managerial assumptions may not be supported by empirical evidence. To illustrate, our recent study of 576 convenience stores revealed weak but significant negative relationships between the display of good cheer by sales clerks (greeting, smiling, eye contact, and saying "thank you") and store sales (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). Better theory and research are needed to help us understand the consequences, as well as the causes, of the emotions expressed by organizations members.

This chapter considers the emotions that people express at work from three perspectives. First, when comparisons are made among role occupants, there is considerable variation in expressed emotions. We introduce a framework proposing that norms and characteristics of role occupants are the primary influences on the emotions that they express to target persons. Second, although these influences form the ground rules for the emotions expressed within transactions,



we propose that two other—more transient—factors further influence how each transaction unfolds: cues present at the outset of the transaction and feedback from the target person. Third, we explore how the emotions expressed by organizational members influence target persons. We conclude with a discussion of the hazards and opportunities associated with studying expressed emotions in organizational settings.

## EXPLAINING VARIATION IN EMOTIONS EXPRESSED BY ROLE OCCUPANTS

The framework in Figure 1 summarizes the factors that are proposed to influence and constrain the emotions expressed at the role-occupant level of analysis. The model predicts variation in the content, intensity, and diversity of displayed feelings. We propose that variation in these three dimensions is influenced by societal, occupational, and organizational norms concerning which emotions ought to be displayed and that variation in displayed feelings is further influenced by role occupants' enduring characteristics and inner feelings on the job. The framework also proposes that discretion about displayed emotions moderates the relationship between the two sets of influences and displayed emotions.

### *Dimensions of Role Occupants' Emotional Behavior*

The tasks of defining, sorting, and interpreting emotions have intrigued and puzzled intellectuals for a long time. Darwin's (1965) *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals* was first published in 1872. William James posed the question "What is an emotion?" in 1884. More than 100 years later, this question remains unanswered: "the phenomena to which *emotion* or *emotional* is attached appear to be diverse. Also, there is no agreement about which phenomena there are" (Frijda, 1986, p. 1, emphasis in original). Describing the range of human emotion is beyond the scope of this chapter. Our focus is on expressed emotions that may, or may not, reflect a person's inner feelings. We consider displayed emotions (or expressive behavior) that serve as a form of communication between a sender and receiver. Specifically, we seek to predict variation in content, intensity, and diversity of emotions expressed by role occupants (the senders) to target persons (the receivers) whom they encounter in organizational life.

**Content.** The content of displayed emotions is manifested in facial expressions, bodily gestures, tone of voice, and language. These are complex behaviors. Indeed, many of the problems associated with naming, grouping, and sorting felt emotions also arise in the study of displayed emotions (Davitz, 1969; Hochschild, 1983). In comparison to felt emotions, however, there is greater consensus about the content of displayed emotions, especially facial expressions.

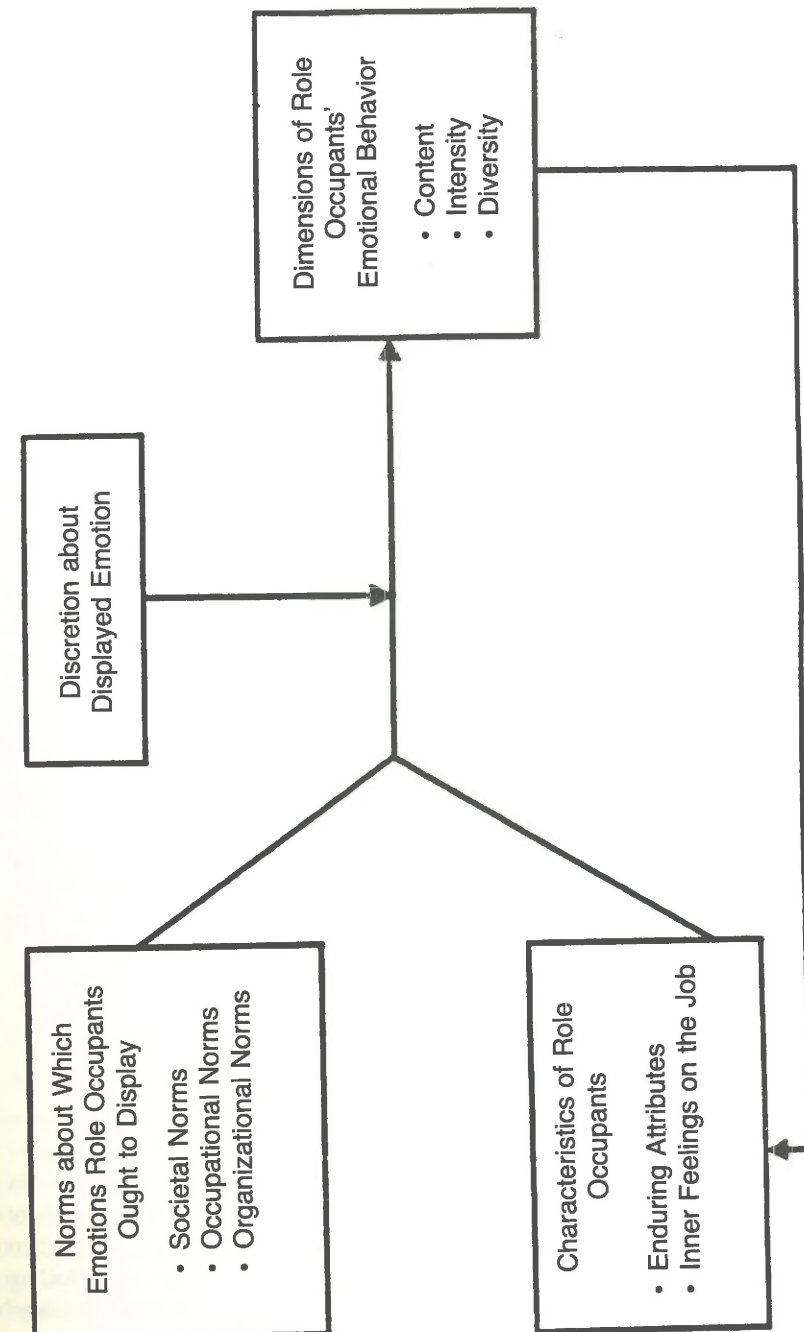


Figure 1 Factors that Influence Emotions Expressed by Role Occupants



Greater consensus arises because studying felt emotions requires making inferences about internal states from behavior; in contrast, emotional expressions are behaviors that can be studied directly.

Psychological research on expressed emotions suggests that pleasant and unpleasant (or positive and negative) displayed feelings can be reliably distinguished by observers. Reviews of empirical research by Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth (1972) and by Ekman and Oster (1979) conclude that both expert raters and untrained subjects can accurately distinguish between the display of pleasant and unpleasant emotions. Moreover, the simple pleasant-unpleasant dimensions appears to be useful for characterizing and measuring emotions expressed across all cultures (Ekman & Oster, 1979).

Much less work has focused on whether the positive-negative continuum is useful for studying the emotions displayed by organizational members. But some evidence suggests that observers can reliably identify pleasant emotions expressed by employees who are working in natural settings. We found satisfactory interrater reliabilities in a pair of studies where observers were trained to code whether sales clerks smiled, greeted, thanked, or maintained eye contact with customers (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli 1987).

Specific studies may also benefit from using more precise categories of expressed emotions, especially when the focus is on variation within cultures. Kemper (1985) argues that any given culture or subculture can socialize its members to feel, convey, and identify in others as many emotions as there are social situations that a member may encounter: "Where social patterns are very complex, emotional life differentiates into more finely shaded nuances in order to accommodate their greater variety of socially differentiated conditions" (pp. 43-44). Geertz's (1959) ethnographic study of the Javanese culture, for example, indicated that Javanese were socialized to distinguish among three varieties of expressed respect: *wedi*, *isin*, and *sungkan*. Although these sentiments are related to emotions expressed in other cultures, Geertz asserted that the nuances of these three emotions were uniquely Javanese. Moreover, studies conducted across different occupations and organizations may lead to different categorization schemes of expressed emotions even within the same culture. We expect, for example, that professional actors and clinical psychologists will recognize finer distinctions among expressed emotions than will engineers and airplane pilots.

**Intensity.** This second dimension refers to the strength or magnitude of the emotion expressed, regardless of its content. Laboratory research suggests that trained raters can reliably distinguish whether expressed pleasant and unpleasant emotions are strong or weak. Ekman and his colleagues, for example, report that raters can reliably determine the magnitude of expressed emotions, including happiness, disgust, and sadness, regardless of whether such displayed feelings

are contrived (Ekman & Friesen, 1975) or spontaneous (Ekman, Friesen, & Ancoli, 1980).

Organizational research has not focused directly on the intensity of expressed emotion. But ratings of intensity are likely to be reliable and valid, especially when the relatively simple positive-negative dimension is used. We contend, for example, that differences in the intensity of the positive emotions expressed by receptionists in dentist offices, people who deliver Domino's pizzas, and the beauty consultants who sell Mary Kay Cosmetics could reliably be distinguished by researchers or others.

Receptionists in dentists' offices typically respond to patients with mildly positive emotions. People who deliver Domino's pizzas are likely to display more intense positive emotions (at least to patrons), in part because they want to earn tips. In comparison to receptionists, they are more likely to offer broader smiles and to utter social pleasantries. Beauty consultants who sell Mary Kay Cosmetics display far more intense positive emotions than receptionists or pizza delivery persons. The television program "60 Minutes," for example, showed portions of the annual national convention held for these beauty consultants. They responded to one another with giant grins and streams of superlatives ("This is the best thing that ever happened in my life!"). They also sang "I've got that Mary Kay Enthusiasm," danced, and clapped their hands in a wild frenzy of normative enthusiasm.

**Diversity.** The third dimension proposed in Figure 1 refers to variation in the content and intensity of expressed emotions: When multiple observations are made of a given role occupant, the range of displayed feelings may be large or small. We believe that laboratory research has not considered this dimension explicitly because, such experiments usually involve only brief observations of subjects' emotional behavior. But diversity is an analytically useful dimension in natural settings because the emotional behavior displayed by some organizational members varies relatively little, while the emotional behavior of others varies greatly in both content and diversity.

All organizational members—indeed all human beings—do display some diversity in expressive behavior (Frijda, 1986). Roy's (1959) classic study of "Banana Time" suggests that, even when a task requires or evokes little variation in expressed emotion, a wide range of emotions may be expressed during informal interaction.

But some role occupants do convey a wider range of emotions than others. Denison and Sutton (forthcoming) encountered evidence of extreme diversity in their observational study of a team of surgical nurses. They were intrigued, and occasionally a bit frightened, by the number of different emotions expressed by one nurse during the first day of the study. They discerned that the feelings she displayed included empathy and compassion (when talking with patients and



their families). solemnity and respect (when working with physicians in the operating room), irritation and disgust (when talking about physicians behind their backs), surliness and laughter (when joking with physicians during break), and contempt and anger (when reprimanding the researchers for taking so much of her time).

### *Factors That Influence Emotions Expressed by Role Occupants*

Figure 1 proposes two sets of influences on the content, intensity, and diversity of role occupants' displayed feelings: social system norms and characteristics of role occupants.

**Norms.** This section focuses on display rules (Ekman, 1973), or behavioral expectations about which emotions ought to be expressed and which ought to be hidden. Display rules are distinct from feeling rules (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Display rules refer to norms about which emotions members of a social system ought to *express*; feeling rules "define what we should feel in various circumstances" (Hochschild, 1979, p. 289); thus they refer to emotions members ought to *experience*.

**Societal norms** guide interpersonal behavior in all cultures. Societal norms include display rules. The expression of emotion in organizational roles is influenced by general norms that govern which emotions should be expressed and which should be hidden in exchanges between members of a given culture (see Figure 1). Frijda (1986) reports that such widely held expectations influence both the intensity and the interpreted content of displayed emotions. He notes, for example, that the Chinese culture prescribes the amount of weeping (i.e., intensity of expressed sadness) that is appropriate at a funeral according to the relationship between the grieving person and the dead. The same emotional expression can also convey different messages in different cultures. Labarre reports that the Japanese smile when reprimanded because "Smiles should be seen as the social signal saying 'Thank you master for putting me right'" (1947, cited by Frijda, 1986, p. 62).

Norms about the expression of anger also vary across cultures. For example, temper tantrums and violence against parents are encouraged among children of the Yanomano Indians of Brazil because they are viewed as signs of bravery. But such behavior is strongly reprimanded by American parents, and chronic aggression is viewed as a sign of mental illness (Gordon, 1981).

Overarching norms of this kind also determine the content, intensity, and meaning of the emotions conveyed in organizational life. Consider the example of smiling at customers by members of three cultures. There is a strong norm in American service organizations that employees should smile at customers and act friendly; such social niceties are part of the job. The Lucky Stores supermarket chain, for example, instructs checkout clerks that "a friendly smile is a

must." In contrast, as Rafaeli (1988) reports, such a norm does not exist in Israel. Customers there viewed smiling by a supermarket cashier as a sign of inexperience. Furthermore, in the Moslem culture smiling can be a sign of sexual attraction, and therefore women are socialized not to smile at men. Indeed, executives of a New York bank recently discovered that female tellers from Moslem countries would not smile at male customers—despite corporate rules that they should—because it signaled sexual attraction in their culture.

**Occupational and organizational norms** about expressed emotions are also primary influences on the content, intensity, and diversity of emotions that role occupants perceive that they ought to display on the job (see Figure 1). Occupational and organizational norms are sometimes easily distinguished. For example, a physician may learn the appropriate professional demeanor during medical school and may display that demeanor in the next seven hospitals at which he or she practices medicine. But these two sets of norms are difficult to separate; moreover, the means used to maintain such norms are similar for both occupations and organizations. Thus occupational and organizational display rules are discussed here together.

We have proposed elsewhere (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) that occupations and organizations use three means to maintain formal and informal norms about expressed emotions: recruitment and selection, socialization, and rewards and punishments.

Organizations use formal and informal practices in their efforts to select new members who will convey expected emotions. For instance, members of the team that designed Apple's Macintosh computer sought new employees who shared their wild enthusiasm for the product. The film *In Search of Excellence* (Tyler & Nathan, 1985) reports that a key part of the selection interview was "introducing" potential newcomers to a prototype of the machine. If an applicant did not react to the machine with the normative exaggerated enthusiasm, he or she was not invited to join the design team.

Organizations may also use interviews to emulate a job setting that calls for skilled emotion work. Hochschild (1983), for example, describes a procedure used by Pan American Airlines to select flight attendants who are able to display the good cheer required for the job:

The recruiter called in a group of six applicants, three men and three women. She smiled at all of them and then said: "While I'm looking over your files here, I'd like to ask you to turn to your neighbor and get to know him or her. We'll take about three or four minutes, and then I'll get back to you." Immediately there was bubbly conversation, nodding of heads, expansion of posture, and overlapping ripples of laughter. After three minutes the recruiter put down the files and called the group to order. There was immediate total silence. All six looked expectantly at the recruiter: how had they done on their animation test? (pp. 96-97).

Socialization practices are among the most powerful means for inducing behavior that is consistent with organizational display rules. Organizational hand-



books, training manuals, and training programs frequently include segments about emotional demeanor. Bank tellers, for example, are explicitly told that they should smile and be friendly toward customers. Along similar lines, Komaki, Blood, and Holder (1980) reported that they used behavior modification to "foster friendliness in a fast food franchise."

Socialization in some jobs entails learning to express both positive and negative emotions to others and learning how intense such affect should be. A woman who manages bill collectors told us that her subordinates learn to be pleasant to clients who are a month or two late on their Visa and MasterCard payments, to express firm disapproval to clients who are three or four months late, and to use nasty insults (e.g., "Why do you keep lying to me?") when speaking with clients who are five or six months late.

Occupational socialization conducted by agencies outside the employing organization may also include lessons about which emotions should and should not be expressed on the job. Aspiring department store Santa Clauses, for example, sometimes attend special training programs. The "University of Santa Claus" in Oakland, California, teaches future Santas to smile and be jolly "even when a kid who isn't quite potty trained has an accident" (Rules for Santas, 1984).

Socialization about the expression of emotion also occurs informally. A medical intern described in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* how she learned the display rules of the medical profession:

In my first months as a medical student I was called a "softie" when I cried about patients. . . . Classmates and physicians told me "you get too emotionally involved with patients. You will never be a good doctor" (Bell, 1984, p. 2684).

Once display rules have been learned, organizations may use a variety of formal and informal practices to maintain employees' displayed rage, stoicism, friendliness, joy, or whatever other expressive behaviors are expected. We have mentioned Southland Corporation's "Thanks a Million" contest that was used to encourage friendliness among its sales clerks. Other programs that have been used in 7/Eleven stores include \$25 gifts and new cars to clerks who are "caught" being friendly to mystery shoppers; in addition, large bonuses were awarded to regional managers when a high percentage of sales clerks in the stores they managed were observed thanking, greeting, and smiling at customers.

Management may even invite target persons to help enforce display rules for employees. For example, the Food and Liquor store in Hayward, California, posts a sign above the cash register that informs customers:

We Guarantee To Give You:

- A Friendly Greeting
- A Cheerful Smile
- A Register Receipt

If we fail at one of these, we will send you a \$5.00 gift certificate. Please ask the clerk for a postage paid card. If you have any questions call our 24 hour toll free Hotline (800) 862-4672

Occupations also use a variety of practices to maintain display rules. Ethnographic research on poker players indicates that they use jokes, insults, and playful teasing to remind one another which emotions ought to be expressed and which ought to be hidden. An experienced player who routinely expressed too much joy and arrogance after winning a big pot (and who held up the game too much) was reprimanded as follows:

Man, you are way out of line. You ought to see yourself when you're winning. You're jerking off and telling jokes and holding up the game to your own speed. . . . You ought to play with a mirror in front of your face so you can see what you're doing (Hayano, 1982 p. 37).

*Characteristics of Role Occupants.* Norms provide strong guidance about which emotions should and should not be expressed by role occupants. Figure 1 proposes, however, that expressed emotions are further shaped by a role occupant's enduring attributes and the emotions that he or she feels. Figure 1 also proposes a reciprocal causation between expressed emotions and characteristics of role occupants: felt emotions both affect and are affected by displayed emotions.

Psychologists who study individual differences have identified literally hundreds of *enduring attributes* that may influence which emotions people are predisposed to feel and express.<sup>1</sup> We cannot provide a complete review of this massive literature here. Instead, we consider three individual differences that are especially promising points of departure for research on the expression of emotion in organization life: gender, self-monitoring of expressive behavior, and emotional stamina.

First, gender has been found to be a consistent influence over which emotions people are likely to express. Gender differences in all facets of nonverbal behavior are well documented (Deaux, 1985). Findings suggest that women are more likely than men to display warmth and liking during transactions with others (Bem, 1974; Freize & Wicklund, 1976; Siegler & Siegler, 1976). And a similar pattern of differences appears to characterize verbal behavior (Putnam & McCallister, 1980). Moreover, gender appears to influence the content of emotions expressed by organizational members as they carry out their work roles. Rafaeli's (1989) study of transactions between approximately 1,300 clerks and 11,000 customers found that female clerks were more likely than male clerks to smile at both male and female customers.

Second, Snyder (1974) proposed that individuals vary in the extent to which they monitor their own expressive behavior. He found that a self-report measure of individual differences in self-monitoring predicted the extent to which subjects could control facial and vocal expressive behavior. He also found that people who scored higher on the measure of self-monitoring attended more closely to



situational cues about which emotions should and should not be displayed. Moreover, Snyder argues that people who hold jobs that require control of expressive behavior are likely to learn or be predisposed to monitor their expressive behavior more closely. Support for this argument is indicated by his finding that, in comparison to other subjects, professional stage actors engage in more self-monitoring. This work suggests that role occupants who engage in higher levels of self-monitoring are likely to have more control over the emotions that they express and likely to follow display rules more closely.

Third, we expect that emotional stamina will predict the content, intensity, and diversity of expressed emotions. Hochschild (1983) coined the term *emotional stamina*, which refers to the ability to express certain feelings over an extended period of time. She focused on the staying power of employees who are required to express emotions in accordance with corporate display rules over long periods of time.

Hochschild demonstrates that flight attendants are expected to display smiles and warmth as part of their job. The job of a flight attendant illustrates how emotional stamina influences the feelings that a role occupant will display. Flight attendants with great emotional stamina will have the ability to maintain required cheer over long periods. We expect that such stamina will enable them to maintain the expression of more intense pleasant emotions for long periods of time and that when they do "lose control," the intensity of their unpleasant emotions will be weaker. In contrast, flight attendants with low emotional stamina will stray from organizational display rules more often and thus display a lower proportion of positive feelings, display less intense positive feelings, and "lose control" and express negative emotions such as irritation more frequently.

*Inner feelings on the job* also influence which emotions will be expressed by organizational members (see Figure 1). Indeed, although there is no one-to-one match between expressed and felt emotions, a series of experimental studies by Ekman and his colleagues indicates that emotions conveyed through facial expressions are positively correlated with self-reported feelings. For example, Ekman, Friesen, and Ancoli (1980) found consistent positive relationships between expressed and reported happiness, as well as expressed and reported disgust. Moreover, Ekman (1981) asserts that even when people try to display emotions they do not feel, they may provide target persons with "deception clues" that lead to "leakage" of their true feelings. For example, a nurse who tries to act concerned and warm toward a patient whom he actually dislikes may betray his true feelings by tapping his foot and wringing his hands.

Although display rules may constrain emotions expressed by role occupants, we argue later that many people have jobs in which they have sufficient autonomy to express their inner feelings. Furthermore, some people may express their true feelings because they cannot suppress them. Snyder's (1974) work suggests that people who engage in low levels of self-monitoring will be less skilled at

presenting false feelings and less likely to notice social cues that they should present false feelings.

Even people who work in organizations with rigid display rules may be allowed to display their true feelings on some occasions. Their jobs may include "time-outs" (Van Maanen, 1986) during which they have an opportunity for "role release" (Goffman, 1961, pp. 96-99), specifically release from formal display rules. Van Maanen implies that—as with all other social encounters—time-outs have display rules. But norms during time-outs typically support a wider range of expressive behavior and more frequent display of so-called true feelings than during times in which organization members are "on the job."

Denison and Sutton (forthcoming) observed such a time-out when the surgical nurses they studied took refuge from doctors in the nurses' lounge; during this time, the nurses felt free to complain about doctors and hospital administrators. Van Maanen's ethnographic study of Scotland Yard detectives suggests that the use of alcohol is a powerful sign that a time-out has begun; independent of the physiological effects of alcohol, the presence of wine, beer, or liquor is a sign that norms, including display rules, are relaxed, and people can feel freer to display their inner feelings. Similarly, Mars and Nicod (1984) report that when a staff party is held for restaurant employees, they are released from the display rules that govern their behavior when they are carrying out their formal roles. Indeed, some employees use these opportunities for revenge: "A few people will always seize the opportunity for role release to criticize, abuse, ridicule, humiliate, or otherwise behave offensively towards management" (p. 100).

Thus, although role occupants are socialized to present false feelings on some occasions, their inner feelings also appear to be a strong influence on the content, intensity, and diversity of feelings that they express in organizational life. This relationship between internal states and expressive behavior means that research on display of emotion in organizational life can be linked to the large body of research on variables that determine inner feelings associated with the job.

Thousands of studies have examined job satisfaction, which is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of the job (Locke, 1976). Variables that have been found to predict satisfaction such as job design (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), supervision (Fleishman, 1973), and job stress (Kahn, 1981) may thus have indirect effects on expressive behavior in organizations. In addition to satisfaction, research on job stress has examined an array of internal feelings associated with job experiences. For example, a study by Caplan et al. (1975) suggests that role demands may evoke affective states, including depression, anxiety, irritation, and boredom. As with satisfaction, such inner feelings may also influence expressive behavior.

Finally, Figure 1 suggests a feedback loop, in which *expressed emotions influence felt emotions*. In other words, we propose that there is a reciprocal relationship between expressed and felt emotion. Our general argument is that if one



offers false emotions (in response to display rules), inner feelings may change and become consistent with expressed feelings. There appear to be at least two mechanisms through which such reciprocal causation occurs, one psychological and the other physiological.

First, research on cognitive consistency suggests that if a person is induced to express an opinion that he or she does not believe, he or she will become uncomfortable. The discomfort can be resolved by changing attitudes so that they are consistent with behaviors (Festinger, 1957). A similar kind of discomfort caused by dissonance between private and displayed self may be experienced by a person who, say, has a job that requires expressing enthusiasm that he or she does not feel. Such a role occupant may eventually become enthusiastic, since expressing enthusiasm would enhance consistency between private and displayed selves, and thus eliminate the discomfort. Indeed, Mary Kay Ash (1984) offers advice to her beauty consultants that reflects this view: "We often tell our beauty consultants: You've got to fake it until you make it—that is—act enthusiastic and you will become enthusiastic" (p. 61).

Second, Zajonc's efforts to reclaim Wynbaum's 1906 theory of "facial effereence" suggest another mechanism through which expressed emotions can influence experienced emotions. Zajonc (1985) proposes that smiling and laughing increase blood flow to the brain, which increases the level of oxygen in the brain, which in turn causes a feeling of exuberance. He argues:

The proof is simple. Pull the corners of your mouth apart by contracting the major zygomatic muscle, as if in an intense exaggerated smile. After several seconds, the frontal vein will be gorged with blood. The zygomatic muscle acts as a ligature on the branches of the external carotid and the slave action of the corrugator blocks the return blood. Cerebral blood is thus momentarily retained causing temporary intracerebral hyperemia, which in turn leads to a surge of subjectively felt positive affect (pp. 9–10).

Zajonc argues that frowning has converse effects; it reduces the flow of blood to the brain, which in turn leads to subjectively felt negative affect.

This theory that smiling makes one happy and frowning makes one sad has interesting—and untested—implications for the effects of organizational display rules on internal feelings. It suggests that people in jobs where they must smile will experience constant (physiologically induced) positive affect and that people who must act nasty on the job will often experience physiologically based negative affect. A long-term implication of this argument is that people who are required to act pleasant on the job may report higher levels of job satisfaction, and people in jobs where they are required to act unpleasant will report lower levels of job satisfaction.

This hypothesis could be tested by comparing "happy" and "sad" circus clowns.<sup>2</sup> Evidence for Wynbaum's theory would be found if clowns who work displaying happy faces reported greater job satisfaction than clowns who work displaying sad faces. Moreover, even stronger evidence would be found if a lon-

gitudinal field experiment was done in which happy and sad clowns reversed roles at several points during the study. Wynbaum's theory suggests that the switch from the sad to the happy role would lead to an increase in reported job satisfaction and that the switch from the happy to the sad role would lead to a decrease in reported job satisfaction.

### *Discretion about Displayed Emotions as a Constraint*

What has a stronger influence over expressed emotions: norms or characteristics of role occupants? Certainly, hundreds of factors influence the relative weighting of these two sets of influences. We propose, however, that discretion about displayed emotion is among the most powerful influences on this relative weighting (Figure 1).

Discretion over expressed emotions has not been studied specifically. Much research indicates, however, that roles vary widely in the amount of overall autonomy granted to occupants (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Our underlying assumption is that as people are allowed greater personal control over expressive behavior, they will exercise their power. Societal, occupational, and organizational norms will be heeded less, and thus enduring personal attributes and inner feelings will have a stronger influence. For instance, waiters and waitresses in restaurants are generally expected to act pleasant. But some restaurants provide waiters and waitresses very precise guidelines about expressive behavior. They may be required always to smile, or always to be enthusiastic, or never to be nasty to a customer even if her or she is deeply obnoxious. In other words, role occupants' expressive behavior is narrowly constrained. But other restaurants may allow waiters or waitresses to "be themselves" as long as they are friendly and may implicitly condone (or at least not punish) waiters and waitresses who occasionally show their true nasty feelings to obnoxious customers. In the latter example, enduring attributes and internal feelings will likely have a stronger influence than norms over emotions expressed by role occupants.

The example of Disney World employees highlights how role occupants' enduring characteristics and inner feelings can have little influence when they have low discretion over expressed emotions. These employees are trained to follow organizational display rules no matter how they feel, particularly when they are "onstage" with Disney "guests." We recently spoke with a new Disney World employee who had attended an employee orientation session known as "Traditions I," which is required for all new Disney employees.<sup>3</sup> The trainer made a point of telling newcomers that when they are onstage with Disney guests, they must be nice no matter how nasty the guest happens to be and no matter how angry they feel. The trainer told an elaborate and funny story about why a nice customer might be nasty. He told the newcomers: "Everyone treats the guests as VIPs. The only reason we are here is that the guests come to see us and our show. 99% of the guests are nice, but it's that tiny 1% that you can't let get to



you." Indeed, Disney employees learn that if they do let the "tiny 1%" get to them, it is grounds for dismissal. In short, Disney allows employees very little discretion about which emotions they convey and which they hide when they are in contact with guests.

## EXPRESSED EMOTIONS BETWEEN AND WITHIN TRANSACTIONS

The previous section discussed factors that influence and constrain the emotions displayed by role occupants. We proposed a variety of factors that affect role occupants' perceptions of what emotions they ought to display. These factors include societal, occupational, and organizational norms and role occupants' enduring attributes and inner feelings on the job. The relative influence of these two sets of forces is moderated by the amount of discretion an employee has about displayed emotions. These factors have a strong influence over the feelings a role occupant conveys to the others. But specific features of the target person and the setting may help role occupants make more refined judgments about which emotions should be expressed during a particular transaction. Thus, we propose that characteristics of the target person and the setting lead to variation between individual transactions that occur within roles. Moreover, emotions expressed in a transaction may vary as the sequence of communication unfolds. Feedback from a target person may determine whether the emotions expressed initially are abandoned, revised, or maintained (Mars & Nicod, 1984; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Thus variation also exists within transactions.

Figure 2 summarizes our view of the factors that determine variation in conveyed emotions between roles, between transactions, and within transactions. *Role ground rules* influence variation in emotional behavior between roles; these ground rules are the norms and characteristics of the role occupant. *Transaction-defining cues* refer to attributes of the target person and of the setting that educate the role occupant about which emotions should be expressed in a particular transaction. Cues from the target person include age, sex, race, or dress; cues from the setting include temporal features (e.g., night or day), atmospheric conditions (e.g., temperature), and the interpersonal context of the transaction (e.g., is it crowded?).

Transaction-defining cues enable the role occupant to categorize the transaction. Waiters, for example, may distinguish between "good" and "poor" tippees; flight attendants may categorize a customer as the "nagging" type; and dentists may categorize a patient as "sensitive" or "vain." Knowledge about these categories, which is based on prior experience, enables the role occupant to make more precise judgments about which emotions to express in the forthcoming interaction.

But neither role ground rules nor transaction-defining cues can govern the exact nature of the emotions displayed by a role occupant through the course of a

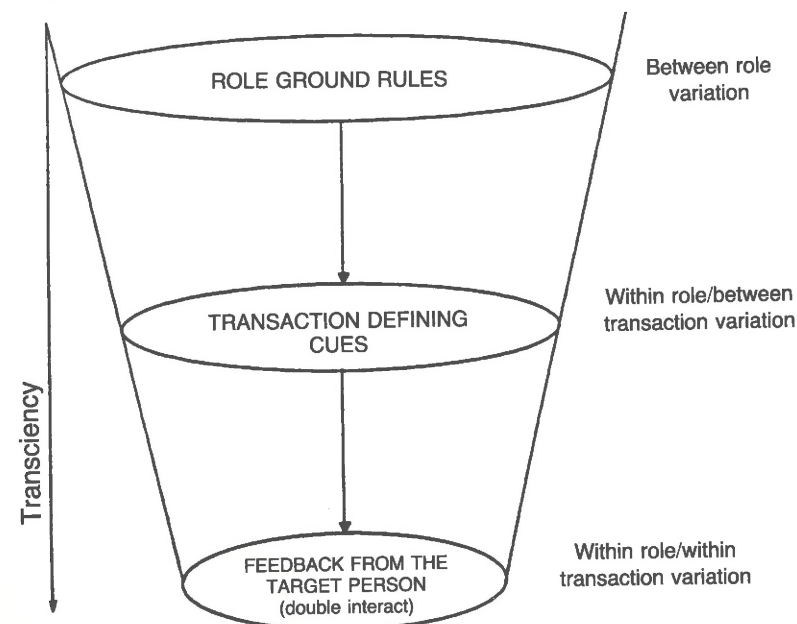


Figure 2 Expressed Emotions Between and Within Transactions

transaction. Rather, this pattern is further constrained by *feedback from the target person* as the transaction unfolds (Figure 2). We propose that this level involves mutual negotiation between the role occupant and the target person. Indeed, the give and take between sender and receiver is composed of a series of double interacts (Weick, 1979). The initial emotions conveyed by a role occupant are an "act"; this act stimulates the target person to respond with implicit or explicit feedback (an "interact"). The role occupant relies on this feedback to determine his or her "next round" of emotional behavior, hence completing a double interact. Thus, as the transaction unfolds, the role occupant and target person may subtly negotiate through a series of double interacts about which emotions the role occupant should continue to express, which to modify, and which to abandon.

The three levels in Figure 2 vary in degree of transiency. Ground rules are most stable since they vary only between roles. Transaction-defining cues are more transient; within any role these cues will vary to the extent that different target persons or settings are encountered. The negotiated aspects of an interaction are most transient; this category refers to the feedback that emerges as an interaction evolves.

Figure 2 suggests that each level sets the stage for the next level down. The first level, role ground rules, is the point of departure for each transaction. The second level, transaction-defining cues, leads to a further refinement of the emotions displayed at the outset of a transaction. The third level, feedback that



emerges during the transaction, can cause the role occupant to adjust her or his behavior as the transaction unfolds. For example, waiters in a restaurant might be expected to exude enthusiasm and laughter. But a party of older diners who wear formal attire may cue a waiter to "tone down his act." If, however, members of the party drink a lot of beer and start joking with the waiter, he may view this new information as a signal to resume his usual exuberance. We explore transaction-defining cues and feedback from the target person in greater detail in the following sections.

### *Transaction-Defining Cues*

Goffman (1955) proposed in his analysis of "face work" that "it is the rules of the group and the definition of the situation which determine how much feeling one is to have for face and how this feeling is to be distributed among the faces involved" (p. 214). Goffman's rules of the group are similar to role ground rules. We propose further that two categories of information help a role occupant "define the situation": *cues from the target person or persons* and *cues from the setting* of the transaction. These two sets of cues help a role occupant fine tune the emotions that he or she expresses at the outset of a transaction.

*Cues from the Target Person.* These cues comprise the traits of target persons that can be assessed before a transaction begins, usually through only brief observation. These cues typically have the strongest influence on transactions between strangers since, as the relationship between role occupant and target continues, information is likely to emerge that causes the role occupant to modify his or her expressive behavior.

Cues from the target person include demographic variables such as age, sex, and national origin. They also include dress, jewelry, cosmetics, and flagrant mannerisms, which are akin to Goffman's (1971) "body gloss." Indeed, Goffman suggested that body gloss provides useful cues in the appraisal and categorization of others.

Imagine, for example, a professor standing in front of a new class. She observes the class and considers the students. Are they bright? How many are women? How many are foreigners? Who is smiling? Who is talking? Who is looking at me, and who is reading the newspaper? She may tell herself, "The guy in the blue shirt in the front row looks nice; but I'd better stay away from that redhead in the third row who is smirking." Such cues influence which emotional tactics she will use with the class and with individual members. Should she be harsh? Informal? Friendly? Authoritarian? In short, she seeks information that will help her determine the demeanor she should present to a group of people who are about to become the targets of her expressed emotions.

Cues from target persons are even more salient in transactions between a role occupant and a single target person or only a few target persons; the small num-

ber of target persons and their physical proximity enable the role occupant to discern relevant cues more easily. To illustrate, Mars and Nicod's ethnographic study of "The World of Waiters" (1984) led them to conclude that "what every waiter certainly must know, from the beginning of their first encounter, is into which kind of *transaction* the customer prefers to enter" (p.55). Mars and Nicod found that waiters distinguish between "boundary-open" and "boundary-closed" transactions with restaurant patrons. In boundary-open transactions, the encounter between a waiter and a diner is a kind of meeting of friends in which the waiter is an active participant. In contrast, boundary-closed transactions "put a frame around the participants, who are more concerned with exclusion" (p. 56).

According to Mars and Nicod (1984), there are rigid rules about emotional expression in boundary-closed transactions; waiters know that they must be pleasant and formal but not friendly. They also know that jokes are unacceptable. But these rules may be broken or modified if diners want a boundary-open transaction. Diners who seek a boundary-open transaction expect the waiter to be informal and friendly and to reveal his so-called real feelings. Thus, waiters look for cues from new diners to decide whether they are expecting a boundary-open or boundary-closed transaction:

The waiter must learn the meanings attached to the cues and signals which people transmit so that he can distinguish the different types of diners and develop an appropriate set of responses. Learning how to classify and deal with the unknown diner by interpreting cues and signals has to be learned over time. With experience the waiter can distinguish various types of customers according to the kinds of transactions that they would probably involve him in (p.60).

Mars and Nicod observed that waiters rely on two sets of cues in the classification process: primary traits of a diner's appearance such as gender, race, class, and state of health, and secondary traits of appearance, such as manner of dress, gesture, posture, and bodily movement. When a waiter approaches a party of people—rather than an individual diner—he tends to use the host as the main source of transaction-defining cues.

Similar to waiters, bus drivers are also faced with the need to assess their customers with relatively little information. Richman (1969) reports that informal conversations among bus drivers often concern the analysis and classification of passenger types. Passengers may be classified as "sympathizers" or "the enemy," and this latter category is further divided into "bosses," "the awkward ones," and "fare dodgers." Passengers who check their watches as they board the bus, for example, are likely to be labeled as "bosses." Richman asserts that the behavior of a bus driver toward a passenger, particularly expressive behavior, is influenced heavily by the category in which the passenger is placed.

Members of higher-status occupations also use cues from target persons to determine which emotions they should express and which they should hide in a



transaction. A pediatrician recently told Rafaeli that she always tries to spend a few minutes doing "paperwork" while the patients (parents and child) are in the office:

That way I can learn a little more about them. Are the parents anxious? Do I need to support and console them before I deal with the child? How do they deal with the child? Is the kid spoiled? If they "baby talk" the child, I figure I should probably do the same. If not, I can be my professional self with them.

For this professional, a few seconds of observation—all the waiter and bus driver are allocated—are not sufficient. She has learned to create a longer opportunity for herself to assess the nature, needs, and expectations of the targets of her expressed emotions.

Transaction-defining cues may include information that is less obvious than that discussed above but equally important. An angry, fuming, red-faced customer, for example, is likely to trigger a different set of emotional behaviors from the role occupant than a pleasant, smiling, and patient client. To illustrate, one supermarket cashier Rafaeli (1988) interviewed reported:

Some customers are always complaining. They do it loud, too. And you can see it on their face that they are angry about something. Usually it is about the fact that they have to stand in line. So we try to work real quick with them. We pass them through quickly without any nonsense. No jokes with them. Otherwise they will raise hell.

Target persons may also send cues indicating that they expect the forthcoming transaction to be devoid of any expressive behavior by either party. Indeed, Goffman (1971) observes that when strangers come into contact with one another, they may be careful to avoid any indication that they know each other or want to know each other ("tie-signs" in his words). When no tie-signs are made at the outset of a transaction, Goffman asserts that it will be characterized by "civil inattention"; in other words, the parties will carefully ignore each other. The omission of tie-signs may also characterize relations between people who see each other every day (e.g., people who ride a commuter train together).

Some quantitative research supports our contention that cues from target persons influence expressed emotions. Rafaeli (1989), for example, examined more than 11,000 transactions between clerks and customers in a national chain of convenience stores. She found that the gender of the customer—a transaction-defining cue that clerks can recognize immediately—influenced the emotions displayed by clerks. Rafaeli did not find a main effect for customer sex. But she did observe a significant clerk sex–customer sex interaction. Clerks of either sex offered more smiling, greeting, and eye contact to customers of the opposite sex. Rafaeli concludes that some form of social (perhaps courting) behavior spills over into on-the-job emotional behavior.

Goodsell (1976) conducted a field experiment in which he manipulated the status cues of customers who interacted with postal clerks. Goodsell reports that status symbols associated with manner of dress were significantly related to the courtesy of service and the emotional front presented by postal clerks. In a similar vein, Rafaeli (1987) found that customer status cues were significantly related to supermarket cashiers' emotional behavior: Well-dressed customers (those wearing jackets, jewelry, and accessories such as hats and ties) were more likely to receive greetings, thanks, and eye contact from cashiers.

These transaction-defining cues have powerful effects on expressive behavior. But the characteristics of target persons may mislead a role occupant about which emotions are appropriate for the transaction. The appearance or behavior of a target person may be inconsistent with what is expected of someone of his or her role and status. Mars and Nicod (1984) for example, described folklore of the restaurant industry about

eccentrics who have none of the defining traits—either primary or secondary—that is appropriate to their particularly high status. Stories are told of well known lords, politicians and actors who appear in restaurants ragged, dirty, drunk or using crude language. These, which are impossible to authenticate, point up the anxiety that waiters experience in making their assessments on relatively little evidence (p. 61).

In sum, both the initial appearance and the behavior of target persons are important sources of information for a role occupant about which emotions he or she should present at the outset of a transaction. The power of such cues to evoke emotional expressions is so strong that role occupants may even ask target persons to deliver certain cues. Maister (1985) tells of a flight attendant on a delayed flight, where customers often feel and express anger, who encouraged passengers to set the tone for forthcoming transactions by making the following announcement: "Please pay us the courtesy of being polite to us so that we can reciprocate in kind" (p. 119).

*Cues from the Setting.* The second set of cues includes transient features of the context in which the transaction occurs. We discuss three sets of such cues: temporal context (e.g., day or night), atmospheric conditions (e.g., lighting and temperature), and the interpersonal context, or the number and attributes of people who are in the setting but external to the transaction (e.g., pace and density).

The temporal context, or timing of a transaction, offers cues about which emotions should be expressed and which should be hidden. Melbin (1978), for example, discusses "Night as Frontier"; he argues that different social norms govern human behavior at night than during the day. Although night is more relaxed, it is also more crime ridden and dangerous. Thus, cab drivers told Henslin (1973) that they feel more trust and are therefore friendlier toward daytime passengers because they are less likely to be robbed during the day. Cab drivers also re-



ported that they could "get a better look" at the passengers during the day and thus could be more confident about the social status and intentions of the passenger (p. 344).

Time of year is a potentially important setting cue. Christmas and holiday time, for example, "tis the season to be jolly." But this espoused norm is threatened because everyone is so busy. For example, while Rafaeli was planning a participant observation study among supermarket cashiers, an executive told her: "I don't think that you should start until after the holiday rush. It is crazy before the holidays. There is so much work that no one really pays any attention to customers."

Along similar lines, bus drivers learn how to adjust their expressed emotions to the time of year. An American bus driver told us that she learned to be especially rude and surly to her passengers and to drivers in automobiles during the Christmas rush. She also reported that she warned new bus drivers about the emotional demands of the Christmas rush by telling them: "Remember, you get three accidents a year. Be sure to save one for the Christmas rush; people in cars are just crazy that time of year. You will want to ram at least one of them."

The difference between the scheduled and actual timing of a meeting or an event may also serve as a cue about which emotions should be expressed in a given transaction. When an employee arrives later than promised, for example, he or she is expected to convey regret to the target person. Richman (1969) suggests that even if a person is not responsible for the delay, he or she is expected to act sorry and accept some responsibility for the delay. Richman studied bus drivers in Manchester, England. He reports that a bus driver who is running late will try to:

transmit the message that he had been moving heaven and earth to arrive at all. This he does by accelerating near the stop, then pulling up with brakes screeching loudly. If the conductor is also experienced, he will reinforce the drama by positioning himself on the platform to greet passengers with a facial expression which is a mixture of harassment and apology (p. 244).

A second category of setting cues comprises atmospheric conditions where the transaction takes place. For example, researchers have documented the negative effects that extreme temperatures have on subjective fatigue and mood (e.g., Nelson, Nillson, & Johnson, 1984). And Griffitt (1970) documented the social-psychological effects of uncomfortable temperatures, reporting that interpersonal attraction was lower among subjects exposed to high temperatures than among subjects exposed to moderate temperatures. When people are grouchy because they are hot, they are less likely to act friendly and may be less likely to expect pleasant emotions from others. Thus it may be legitimate to convey neutral or even negative affect when it is very hot.

A third set of setting cues includes the interpersonal context,—that is, the number and attributes of people who are in the setting but external to the transaction. The extent to which a setting is busy or slow can have a powerful effect on which emotions a role occupant conveys to others. To illustrate, Sutton worked as a clerk for a day at a convenience store. He noticed that the customers expected him to be friendly during slow times. In contrast, customers expected him to be fast and businesslike during busy times (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). He also found that he was nice to customers during slow times because, as his field notes reveal:

[When] there weren't a lot of customers, I was bored with the jobs they were giving me. When no customers were around I'd spend my time putting prices on things, putting cans on shelves, and doing thrilling jobs such as cleaning the nacho machine. I'd get excited when a customer entered the store because talking to customers was the only vaguely interesting thing to do.

Indeed, Sutton was genuinely happy to see customers enter the store when it was slow and would act especially friendly in an effort to prolong the transaction. He engaged in a fifteen-minute conversation with one teenage customer, for example, about how to play one of the video games in the store.

When a store is busy and other customers are in a rush, clerks and target persons are less likely to display pleasant feelings to one another. Indeed, under busy conditions, occasional negative affect by either clerk or customer may be legitimate. Our research in both the United States (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988) and Israel (Rafaeli, 1988) suggests that customers and clerks do not need to negotiate about the pace of a particular store or about the norms of emotional behavior under various pace conditions. Rather, clerks and customers reach instant, tacit agreement about whether "busy store norms" (where customers are to be treated as items for rapid processing) or "slow store norms" (where customers are a source of entertainment) apply to a transaction.

Interpersonal cues may also be provided in the behavior of the previous targets of the role occupant's expressed emotions. Helson's (1964) theory of adaptation level posits that prior exposure to a stimulus sets a reference point, or a baseline, that influences subsequent judgments. This theory is supported by experimental research by Thayer (1980) and Manstead, Wagner, and MacDonald (1983).

The theory of adaptation level suggests that interactions with prior target persons serve as a frame of reference for the role occupant about which emotions he or she should display in subsequent encounters. Thus, if a bill collector's first debtor of the day is polite and immediately agrees to pay her bill, the collector might use that prior transaction as a point of departure for the next transaction. He or she might then be especially friendly toward the next debtor. Conversely, if the first client responds with a stream of expletives and slams down the phone,



then our hypothetical bill collector might be expected to be rude, or at least less pleasant, to the next debtor.

### *Feedback from the Target Person as the Transaction Unfolds*

Transaction-defining cues set the stage for the opening of the transaction. These cues determine the emotional demeanor that will be presented during the first few moments of an interaction. But as the sequence of communication continues, feedback will be sent from the target person to the role occupant. A series of double interacts (Weick, 1979) will occur that instruct the role occupant about which emotions should and should not be displayed as the transaction unfolds. This view—that the give and take between the sender and receiver of expressed emotions is composed of a series of double interacts—highlights the active role that the target person plays in shaping the emotions expressed during a transaction. A story told to Van Maanen during his ethnographic research on police officers illustrates how new information that emerges after a transaction has started can shape the emotional behavior of a traffic cop:

Policeman to motorist stopped for speeding: "May I see your driver's license please?"  
 Motorist: "Why the hell are you picking on me and not somewhere else looking for some real criminals?"  
 Policeman: "'Cause you're an asshole, that's why . . . but I didn't know that until you opened your mouth" (Van Maanen, 1978 p. 234).

The policeman in this story began the transaction by expressing neutral emotions or no emotions at all. He encountered new information from the motorist that encouraged him to begin conveying negative and esteem-degrading feelings. The content and intensity of emotions may ebb and flow through the course of any transaction. But we propose that the overall effect of feedback that emerges during a transaction can be to maintain, alter the intensity, or shift the content of emotions expressed by a role occupant at the outset.

*Maintaining Displayed Emotions.* Feedback may simply confirm that the role occupant's initial emotional expressions are consistent with the expectations of the target person. The feedback may be verbal or nonverbal. In either case, the message conveyed by the target person is that the role occupant should maintain the original emotional front. Clark and LaBeef (1982), for example, studied the tactics used by physicians, nurses, police officers, and clergy in delivering messages about a person's death. They report that "death tellers" first deliver the news about the death in a somber manner. The behavior of the recipients of the news offers guidance about consequent emotion work. If friends or relatives react by crying or grieving, the messengers typically maintain their original somber demeanor.

*Altering the Intensity of Displayed Emotions.* Feedback that emerges during a transaction may also directly or indirectly encourage a role occupant to increase the intensity of emotions displayed at the outset of the transaction. In other words, the target person's behavior may encourage the role occupant to amplify his or her original expressive behavior. Komaki, Blood, and Holder (1980) suggest that smiling target persons (in the case, customers in a fast food restaurant) may reinforce role occupants who display positive emotions. Such reinforcement can lead to the amplification of the pleasant emotions displayed at the outset of a transaction.

Conversely, a vicious cycle can emerge when a role occupant acts angry at the outset of a transaction, causing the target to act angry, in turn leading to increased anger by the role occupant. To illustrate, Sutton and Callahan's (1987) study of the stigma evoked by Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code revealed that creditors used insults as part of their (typically futile) efforts to collect debts from the leaders of bankrupt firms. One particularly nasty interchange they observed began when a creditor ("a big fellow, with a red and angry face") started glaring and sneering at the president of a bankrupt firm. The president responded by saying that he did not deserve such treatment; he argued that the bankruptcy was not his fault and that it should be blamed on the landlord. This remark made the creditor even angrier; he then told the president to "quit making excuses for your incompetence" (p. 19).

*Shifting Displayed Emotions.* Feedback from a target person may also lead the role occupant to change the content of the emotions he or she expresses at the outset of a transaction (e.g., from positive to negative or from negative to neutral). For example, Clark and LaBeef's (1982) work on death telling revealed that friends and relatives sometimes respond to news of the death by becoming angry at the messenger. In such cases, nurses, doctors, police officers, and clergy report that they typically shift from a warm and somber demeanor to a neutral emotional front and withdraw from the transaction as quickly as possible.

Feedback from target persons may also induce a role occupant to shift his or her emotional behavior, even though the target person may not have intended to stimulate such a shift. Rafaeli experienced such feedback during her participant-observation as a supermarket cashier. She tried to smile during initial transactions with customers, but customer feedback led to a shift in her behavior from a friendly to a neutral demeanor.

The first two examples describe situations in which the feedback from the target persons led indirectly to a shift in the emotions expressed by role occupants. Unterman and Sesser (1984), two San Francisco restaurant reviewers, offer an example of a direct form of feedback designed to cause role occupants to abandon obviously phony good cheer:

Nothing can put a damper on a meal quicker than having a waiter bug you with "Hi, my name's Bruce" and continuing with "Is everything satisfactory" about twenty times. When



you see this sort of behavior going on at other tables, bring out a good put-down line. We've found one that works: as soon as the waiter walks up, stick out your hand and say in as cheerful a voice you can manage, "Hi, my name's Dave, and I'm your customer tonight." That's guaranteed to stop them speechless (p.vi).

We have also discovered—in several field stimulations of our own—that such obviously fake good cheer can be eliminated by asking the waiter or waitress, "What is the worst thing on the menu?"<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, some target persons may use direct feedback to encourage the role occupant to convey fake friendliness rather than genuine indifference. Consider the following (somewhat disgusting) example reported by Hochschild (1983): "On a 15-hour flight from Hong Kong to New York, a young businessman puts down his drink, leans back, and takes in a flight attendant. . . . 'Hey honey,' he calls out, 'Give me a smile' " (p. 35).

### EFFECTS OF EXPRESSED EMOTIONS ON OTHERS: THE CASE OF FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

Why do role occupants go through so much trouble to express emotions to others? One reason is that displayed feelings can be a potent means for influencing other people. Figure 3 summarizes our view of the effects of expressed emotions on others. It focuses on the relationship between expressed emotions and financial outcomes. Figure 3 indicates that such effects can be studied from both the perspective of individual role occupants and that of the organization in which they are embedded. It also indicates that conveyed feelings may change the behavior of a target person or persons in ways that are both preferred and unwanted. We explore below the nuances of how expressed emotions can influence financial outcomes associated with target persons.

#### *The Individual's Perspective*

Figure 3 proposes that expressed emotions can cause a role occupant to influence the behavior of others in ways that can lead to both preferred and unwanted financial outcomes. In other words, expressive behavior can either enhance or decrease a role occupant's control over a target person.

Control over forthcoming events is important to all human beings. Control can be defined as the existence of a contingent relationship between a person's actions and the subsequent occurrence of outcomes that he or she prefers (Seligman, 1975). Adler stated in 1930 that the need to control one's relevant environment is "an intrinsic necessity of life itself" (cited by Langer & Rodin, 1976, p. 398). This theme is repeated in Seligman's (1975) work on learned helplessness, Lazarus's (1966) writings on coping and stress, and Bandura's (1977a) work on

	Expressed Emotions That Lead to Preferred Outcomes	Expressed Emotions That Lead to Unwanted Outcomes
From Individual's Perspective	A poker player taunts an opponent about being "a rock"; the opponent then bets freely and loses to his tormentor.	A fake smile by a waiter alienates a customer who insults the waiter and doesn't leave a tip.
From Organization's Perspective	A TV station makes a decision to abandon the "happy talk" among the news staff and subsequently increases its market share of television viewers.	A bill collection agency revises its policy and instructs collectors not to be nasty to debtors who are less than 90 days late. Subsequently, the proportion of uncollected bills increases.

Figure 3 Effects of Expressed Emotions on Others: The Case of Financial Outcomes

self-efficacy. Despite differences in jargon, all of these writings emphasize that dependence between behavioral responses and preferred outcomes in one's environment is essential for human well-being.

This view that expressive behavior can be an instrumental act is reflected in Edinger and Patterson's (1983) discussion of the influence of nonverbal behavior, which includes nonverbal affective behavior, on social control. They summarize:

In contrast to the common assumption that nonverbal behavior usually reflects a spontaneous and consistent affective reaction, this research strongly suggests that in many instances nonverbal behavior may be managed to influence the behavior of others (p. 30).

The effects that Edinger and Patterson attribute to nonverbal displays are not limited to situations where one person is more powerful or more dominant than the one he or she wishes to influence. Mars and Nicod note that although waiters tend to be of lower status than their customers, they can nonetheless "seize and hold the initiative by skillful manipulation and by using subtle aggression" (1984 p. 65).

A limited body of quantitative research has documented that emotional expressions can increase the amount of influence that a role occupant has over a target



person. Most of this work has focused on eye contact and gaze. Hamlet, Axelrod, and Kuerschner (1984), for example, explicitly demanded eye contact from junior high school students (e.g., "Jessica, look at me") (p. 555). Their subjects were asked to do tasks such as hanging up their coats, turning around, and putting down their pencils. Explicit demands for eye contact from students "resulted in levels of compliance that were double and triple those of baseline" (p. 553). Along similar lines, Kleinke and Singer (1979) report that pedestrians who were gazed at by researchers were significantly more likely to accept a pamphlet than pedestrians who were not gazed at.

In organizational settings, the ability to use emotional expressions to control target persons can bring about financial gains for role occupants. Mars and Nicod (1984), for example, describe a control-enhancing tactic used by a waitress when she served families with young children. The waitress would knock over the child's drink but make it appear as if the child was the culprit. She would then offer pleasant emotions to the parents through comments such as, "Don't worry; he is only a baby," along with enthusiastic assistance in cleaning up the mess (p. 80). Mars and Nicod report that the continuous good cheer of this waitress, in spite of the discomfort that her customers had "caused," created a sense of obligation in the customers that was usually reflected in their attitude toward the waitress and in the size of their tip. The extra effort to increase her control was especially important to the waitress in such transactions because, as Mars and Nicod note, families with young children are reputed to be notoriously poor tip-pers.

The display of emotions can bring about a variety of desirable outcomes. Among waiters, waitresses, salespersons, and many other service employees, the most important outcome is immediate financial gain, such as a tip or sales commission. Some quantitative research has documented the positive consequences of skilled emotion work by restaurant employees. Tidd and Lockard (1978) examined the influence of smiling by a cocktail waitress over the tips she received from 96 customers. The 48 patrons who received broad smiles offered larger tips (\$23.20 in total) than the other 48 patrons, who were victims of weak, or "minimal" smiles (\$9.40 in total).

Skilled emotion work that includes physical contact has also been shown to generate higher tips. To illustrate, Crusco and Wetzel (1984) describe how touching by a waitress had a positive effect on the tips she collected. The touch manipulation is described as follows:

Participants [diners] were randomly assigned to one of three levels of touch. In the Fleeting Touch condition, the waitress twice touched the diner's palm with her fingers for one half second as she returned the diner's change. In the Shoulder Touch condition, she placed her hand on the diner's shoulder for one to one and one half seconds. In the No-Touch condition, there was no physical contact with the customer. The waitresses were carefully trained to behave consistently during the change-returning transaction (p. 514).

The authors report that touch had a main effect, although the difference between the two touch manipulations was not statistically significant. Customers in the no-touch condition tipped an average of 12.2%; customers who received a fleeting touch tipped an average of 16.7%; and the shoulder touch yielded an average tip of 14.4%.

The financial effects of displaying positive emotions are not limited to service employees. Bradshaw (1980, reported in Webb et al, 1981), for example, found that people who solicit contributions may also benefit from the use of smiles and good cheer. Bradshaw posed as a nun soliciting alms in Grand Central Terminal in New York City. The first day, she wore a glum expression and garnered \$143 in alms. The second day, she wore a broad smile and collected \$186.

The expression of negative affect can also lead to significant financial gains. Hayano's (1982) ethnographic research on poker players indicates that players use emotional expressions of aggression and hostility to weaken an opponent, and hence increase their personal gains:

Players in aggressive games express much of their table talk in the idioms of power and dominance. They threaten to "punish" or "take care of" others. To punish another player means to beat him out of future pots or to "burn up" his money by excessive raising. Among some of the more vibrant players, splashing chips and money around, pressing an aggressive front, and talking a game indeed act as effective symbols of power. These players can "buy" pots by frightening and intimidating opponents who are too confused to defend themselves (p. 57).

So far we have emphasized how the expression of positive or negative emotions may increase the control that a role occupant holds over a target person. Nonetheless, as shown in Figure 3, the expression of inappropriate emotions, or emotions that are construed as insincere by the target person, may cause unwanted effects on the target person, and such effects can have undesirable financial consequences for the role occupant. Customers in restaurants frequently have negative reactions toward what they believe to be "phony" smiles. For example, we observed an incident in which a customer told his waiter, "It's OK. You don't have to smile. I'll give you a tip anyway." In such cases, the customer has expressed a negative reaction to what he or she construes as false good cheer. Customers who have expressed such sentiments are indicating to the waiter that they will not be controlled; in Whyte's (1946) term, such customers have "gotten the jump." The role occupant's emotional display has caused him or her to lose control of the transaction. Such feedback from the target person also implies that if the waiter continues to present his usual emotional facade, the tip will be small.

Along similar lines, Hayano (1982) described how professional poker players—whose livelihood depends on other people who lose money—have an unwritten rule that such "feeders" should never be made to feel bad about their losses. Perhaps the worst sin in this regard is expressing too much joy and arro-



gance about winning money from a feeder. One of the players Hayano gambled with chastised his fellow players for such potentially costly behavior:

You guys better tone down on all your yelling and fooling around during the game. You're going to lose all the feeders, and then who're you going to be left with? Just yourselves jerkin' off as usual. Whose going to support you then? (p. 57).

Our discussion here, along with Figure 3, emphasizes how expressed emotions influence financial outcomes associated with a target person or persons. Such outcomes are important to organizational members because money is among the most flexible, universally exchangeable, and symbolically powerful resources. But the emotions expressed in organizational life also bring about numerous nonfinancial outcomes, some of which may also be instrumental from the target person's perspective. To illustrate, in a qualitative study of emotional behavior in slow versus busy settings, we found that when business is slow and there are few customers, convenience store employees often seek the entertainment that a new customer can provide (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). Thus clerks in slow stores are likely to offer customers positive emotions such as smiling, greeting, and eye contact because it introduces variety in an otherwise boring job. These clerks genuinely enjoy the interaction with the customer, and they believe that the display of positive emotion will cause the customer to stay longer. In this case, the display of positive affect has enhanced the clerk's control because such expressive behavior has increased the chances that he or she will be entertained by customers, a preferred outcome.

Control over the emotional reactions of target persons is another outcome that role occupants may prefer. U.S. deputy marshals who have the task of informing others about the death of friends or relatives, for example, told McClenahan and Lofland (1976) that an important part of delivering bad news was "shoring up or using interaction tactics to mitigate the 'badness' of the news, as well as to control the emotional reactions of the receivers" (in Clark & LaBeef, 1982 p. 367). Furthermore, many of the emotions displayed in organizational life may be expressed for altruistic rather than instrumental purposes. The death tellers may offer kind words because they care about other human beings. Or a supervisor may offer social support to a distressed subordinate out of compassion rather than an instrumental desire to increase the subordinate's productivity.

### *The Organization's Perspective*

Figure 3 indicates that the emotions displayed by role occupants may also increase or decrease the chances that goals will be reached that are desirable from the organization's perspective. The emotions encountered by target persons are displayed by individual employees. But people typically develop an overall image of the emotions that will be displayed in a given organization. Such overall images arise because, after repeated encounters, stimuli generalization takes

place. One may hear comments such as "people in the marketing department are really nasty." Similarly, as a result of stimulus generalization, authors of guidebooks publish overall judgments about the level of friendliness and good cheer that can be expected at hotels and restaurants (e.g., Unterman & Sesser, 1984; Birnbaum, 1987).

The contingent relationship between the expression of emotion by organizational members and various organizational outcomes is especially salient in service organizations. Customers can discern differences in the quality of the emotional front associated with different organizations. And managerial folklore suggests that organizational profits can be increased by employees who display positive and esteem-enhancing emotions to customers (Ash, 1984; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Peters & Austin, 1985). Such writings suggest that if all other factors are held equal, the display of positive emotions by organizational members can increase organizational sales and profits. A training program developed by a national chain of convenience stores teaches managers and clerks that friendly employees create regular customers. The underlying assumption is that clerks' expressive behavior influences the buying behavior of customers. The "S-M-I-L-E System for Increased Sales" module instructs trainees: "Smile!! Service with a smile will make them loyal and make them keep coming back."

Theories of human memory and learning may explain why, in the aggregate, service organizations that employ people who display pleasant emotions that at least appear to be genuine may promote organizational goals. Customers often have considerable degrees of freedom in deciding which organization to patronize for products and services. The emotional front that patrons associate with a particular organization may influence such decisions. Evidence from laboratory studies indicates that positive feelings about an event make it more accessible to memory and more likely to come to mind (Bruner & Postman, 1947; Isen & Shalker, 1982; Teasdale & Fogarty, 1979). Westbrook's research (1980) suggests that these findings may be generalized to organizational settings. Westbrook reports that customers who have felt good about a particular product (that is, their mood was better, they were optimistic, and they expressed general life satisfaction) are more likely to remember the store the next time they consider where to shop.

Moreover, pleasant or unpleasant emotions displayed by organization members may be positively or negatively reinforcing for target persons. To the extent that a customer encounters positive emotions when interacting with an organizational member, he or she will be more likely to seek further interaction with the organization. In the case of customers who are doing their shopping, for example, initial encounters with friendly employees may mark the start of an operant conditioning cycle (Skinner, 1953); the emotions displayed by store employees are the reinforcers, and patronizing the organization is the reinforced behavior. The probability that a given customer will visit a store a second time is increased following the display of positive emotions by salespeople.



A similar cycle may operate when debtors want to avoid the negative emotions previously displayed by bill collectors or when suspects do not want to experience the hostile attitude of interrogators. In both cases, the unpleasant emotional behavior of role occupants may act as a negative reinforcement. Target persons display negatively reinforced behaviors (i.e., they pay their debts or provide information) in order to avoid the role occupant's esteem-deflating emotions.

An organization's emotional front may also influence a target person's behavior through vicarious learning (Bandura, 1977b; Tolman, 1949). The target person does not have to experience the positive or negative reinforcement personally. He or she may watch other target persons encounter such emotions or may decide on a pattern of behavior after hearing or reading that employees of an organization are either nice or surly. For example, diners may select a certain restaurant after reading a review describing it as filled with fun and friendly waiters and waitresses.

But expressing socially desirable emotions may not always increase sales, despite case examples that support these conceptual arguments, including Nordstrom's (Peters & Austin, 1985) and McDonald's (Boas & Chain, 1976). We conducted a study of the relationship between displays of positive emotion (greeting, smiling, thanking, and offering eye contact to customers) and store sales in a national sample of urban convenience stores (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988) and found—to our surprise—that there were weak but significant negative relationships between the expression of positive emotion by clerks and store sales. This finding contradicted the assumption held by executives of this corporation that more smiles led to more sales. We concluded eventually, on the basis of qualitative evidence, that the expression of positive emotion by clerks did not influence customers' shopping behavior because the service ideal associated with these stores (i.e., what customers expected to get from a visit to the store) has traditionally emphasized speed rather than friendliness. Thus, we contend that although extremely rude clerks may reduce sales, most customers who visit these stores don't care whether the clerk acts friendly.

The weak negative relationship was observed because of the differences in the norms between slow and busy stores. Stores that have greater sales are busier with customers standing in line, asking questions, and wandering around. Such busy stores provide little or no support for the expression of positive emotion because people are in a hurry, and they are irritated because of time pressure. In contrast, norms in slow stores support the expression of positive emotion because clerks and customers are not irritated by such pressures, they have time to be friendly, and clerks in slow stores view customers as an important source of entertainment in their boring jobs.

Finally, as Figure 3 indicates, emotions expressed by employees—rather than having no effect or financial performance—may backfire completely and reduce the organization's control over clients or customers. Figure 3 offers the hypothetical example of a bill collection agency that makes less money because of a

change in display rules: bill collectors are instructed to be less nasty to some debtors. We also presented several examples earlier of restaurants whose customers were offended by phony good cheer; when such false cheerfulness is presented by any or all employees, it may become part of the organization's image and may drive customers away.

## DISCUSSION

We urge the field to devote more effort to building and testing theory about the dimensions, causes, and consequences of the emotions expressed in organizational life. Indeed, a primary aim of this chapter is to generate interest in this topic. Yet our optimism about studying expressive behavior in organizational settings occasionally wavers; while writing this and other papers on this topic, we have been haunted by several nagging doubts about the proposed perspective and its implications for empirical research. We describe three of the most troublesome of these concerns below, along with arguments why they do not pose a severe threat to this stream of research.

### 1. Are We Really Proposing Anything New?

We have argued here and elsewhere (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) that although organizational researchers have paid much attention to the internal feelings of organizational members, they have paid relatively little attention to the expression of emotion in organizational life. Nonetheless we have, on occasion, been concerned that we are simply disguising old topics under new labels. In particular, research on leadership and on social support has, at least implicitly, considered the expression of emotion. Three frequently cited dimensions of leadership are "consideration" (Fleishman, 1973), "concern for people" (Blake & Mouton, 1968), and the extent to which leaders are employee centered (Likert, 1967). Each dimension refers in part to the intensity of the positive emotions that leaders convey to their subordinates.

Similarly, social support theorists have identified the specific dimension of "emotional support" or "affective support," which is defined as "expressions of liking, admiration, respect or love" (House, 1981 p. 16). Both leadership and social support researchers have developed survey methods that measure the intensity and frequency with which positive affect is conveyed by organizational members. In the language used here, these survey questions may measure the expressive behavior of role occupants from the perspective of target persons.

These streams of research are clearly related to work on expressed emotions. Nonetheless, neither stream has been viewed by investigators as the explicit study of expressed emotions. "Consideration" and "social support" are usually conceived of and measured in ways that confound them with phenomena other

than expressive behavior. For example, although Fleishman's measure of consideration (see Cook et al., 1981, p. 238) does include items that imply expressed positive emotions (e.g., "He is friendly and easily approached"), many other items in this scale measure aspects of consideration that have nothing to do with expressed emotion, such as flexibility (e.g., "He is willing to make changes") and communication skills (e.g., "He is easy to understand").

In a similar vein, survey research on social support has used items that do not distinguish between emotional and nonemotional forms of help from others. Caplan and his colleagues' (1975) measure of social support, for example, asks respondents if supervisors and other people at work "do things to make your work life easier for you" and "can be relied on when things get tough at work." In short, existing studies of leadership and social support measure a set of behaviors that is much broader, and therefore more vague, than expressed emotion.

## 2. Can Expressive Behavior Be Studied with Rigor?

We have also had concerns about whether emotions can be studied with rigor. Research on emotions has historically relied on self-report data, especially introspection, which often suffer from measurement error and response bias. Establishing the reliability and validity of introspective data is especially difficult. When a person reports feeling happy or sad, we cannot send another observer into the respondent's head to confirm such feelings.

Nonetheless, although methodological problems do arise, expressed emotions are easier to study than internal feelings. Such behaviors can be observed directly. And expressed emotions are present wherever there are human beings. We do not assert that our perspective eliminates the problems associated with studying internal feelings. Indeed, the framework presented in Figure 1 encompasses internal feelings; thus researchers who study the effects of internal feelings on expressive behavior will face the methodological problems associated with introspective data. But at least the primary variable described here, expressive behavior, can be observed and measured directly.

Our efforts to study expressive behavior have also led us to develop a pair of suggestions about how colleagues who join this stream of research can make the best use of their efforts; (1) If you want to do quantitative research, focus on categories of expressive behaviors that are simple and observable, and (2) use qualitative research to capture the complexities of expressive behavior and to develop new theory.

Simple and readily observable expressive behaviors are especially amenable to structured observation. Our research has taught us that behaviors including smiling, greeting, thanking, and maintaining eye contact can be reliably assessed in natural settings. To illustrate this point, one study revealed satisfactory interrater reliability among eight observers of these behaviors; reliability coefficients for

each behavior ranged from .94 to .67. The mean correlation was .82, and the median correlation was .85 (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). Moreover, when the four behaviors (greeting, smiling, eye contact, and thanking) were combined into an index, we obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .76 at the store level of analysis (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988) and .92 at the clerk level of analysis (Rafaeli, 1989).

We believe that this form of structured observation, and related methods, are useful for capturing the basic pleasant and unpleasant emotions conveyed by employees. But we may be looking where the light shines brightest. We worry about this problem because smiling, greeting, and eye contact are only a small subset of the emotions that people express in organizational life. Given current knowledge, we believe that these simple behaviors are a valuable point of departure for quantitative research. Yet for understanding the shades of emotion expressed by organizational members—and for generating new theory—qualitative evidence is more useful.

The apparent precision of quantitative evidence can lead to a shallow and inaccurate picture of the role of expressive behavior in organizational life. Fine distinctions between emotions are difficult to make if one uses structured observations, even if the precise methods developed by Ekman and his colleagues are employed. In contrast, qualitative evidence allows researchers to identify more nuances in expressive behavior. For example, Geertz (1959) was able to distinguish between three slightly different kinds of expressed respect in his ethnographic work with the Javanese. Existing quantitative methods would be of little use for distinguishing among these subtle shades of respect.

Even when expressive behaviors are relatively simple, qualitative evidence is especially well suited for induction, for discovering new things. When we embarked on our quantitative study of the impact of clerk emotional behavior on store performance, it never occurred to us that customers might be a source of entertainment for bored clerks. Nor did we anticipate that displayed emotions are used by clerks use to prolong interactions with their customers. Our hypothesis—that in slow stores customers are an important source of entertainment for bored clerks—was discovered only after we began gathering qualitative data (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988).

## 3. So What? Isn't It a Trivial Topic?

We are haunted by this concern most strongly when one of us was invited to give a seminar at a prestigious management school. The invited speaker suggested a talk on expressed emotions, which evoked a cool and unenthusiastic response from the professor who made the invitation. Another professor from the management school later called to tell the invited speaker (for "your own good") that "we don't care whether people smile or frown at work." In particular, the second professor asserted that management theorists at his school didn't



care whether clerks in convenience stores were friendly or rude since it "didn't have anything to do" with managing a Fortune 500 company. These arguments were intimidating, and the topic of talk was changed. But, in retrospect, this decision was wrong. We believe that the study of expressed emotions has important implications for management, even for executives in Fortune 500 companies.

Our conversations with executives who manage chains of convenience stores and the empirical research on such organizations that we described earlier are telling. The Southland Corporation, a Fortune 500 company, recently spent over \$11 million on the Thanks a Million contest, which was designed to increase the portion of 7/Eleven clerks who offered good cheer to customers. Southland executives thought that the contest was a good investment since they believed that friendly clerks encourage customers to spend more during each visit and to return more frequently. They reasoned that increasing employee courtesy might be a relatively inexpensive way to increase sales 1 to 2%; a 2% increase in sales would bring in more than \$100 million in additional revenues to the corporation.

Our cross-sectional research on convenience stores contradicts this assumption (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988), but it is not conclusive. Unfortunately, theory and research on the power of expressed emotions are not sufficiently well developed to discover if indeed smiling clerks do increase sales in other types of stores. One task for organizational researchers is to provide an answer to questions of this kind.

Southland executives are not alone in needing the answer to such empirical questions. Our economy is shifting away from manufacturing and toward service industries. As a result, leaders of an increasing number of Fortune 500 firms need to understand the nuances of the relationship between the expression of positive emotions and customer behavior. Other executives, such as those who manage the collection of overdue Visa and MasterCard bills, need to understand the relationship between expressed negative emotions and the behavior of debtors. And all leaders could benefit from knowledge about the influence of emotions expressed between members of the organizations that they manage. For example, some firms encourage laughter and giggles during conversations, while such behavior is viewed as unprofessional and may lead to sanctions in other firms. It would be useful to know if employees who are encouraged to laugh and giggle are more creative and more loyal, as some managers claim, or if they generate silly ideas and don't take their work seriously, as other managers claim.

The shift to a service economy (Heskett, 1986), which has occurred in tandem with popular writings on the importance of employees' expressive behavior in service organizations (e.g. Ash, 1984; Peters & Austin, 1985), also means that an increasing number of employees hold jobs in which they are expected to follow carefully specified display rules about which emotions they should and should not display. The impact of such norms on employee well-being is another

aspect of the so-what question that executives should be concerned with, for both humanistic and financial reasons. The humanistic considerations are obvious. But employee well-being also has financial impact because physically and mentally ill employees may lead to costly increases in health insurance premiums, turnovers, and absenteeism.

Hochschild (1983) offers qualitative evidence that emotional dissonance has negative effects on the well-being of flight attendants. Emotional dissonance occurs when employees express emotions that satisfy display rules but clash with their inner feelings. We have qualified Hochschild's argument (see Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) and proposed that the impact of emotional dissonance depends on whether an employee has internalized organizational display rules. If employees believe that offering false emotions should not be part of the job, then they are *faking in bad faith*. But if employees offer false emotions and believe that offering them should be part of their job, then they are *faking in good faith*. We contend that emotional dissonance will be most strongly related to strain among people who fake in bad faith since their level of psychological discomfort will be much higher than people who fake in good faith.

Hochschild's (1983) predictions about the negative effects of emotional dissonance, along with our refinements, are only speculation at this point. Occupational stress researchers have yet to examine systematically the consequences of expressing fake emotions for the mental and physical health of organizational members. Moreover, they have yet to examine how emotional deviance, or expressing emotions that violate display rules (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Thoits, 1985), can influence the mental and physical well-being of role occupants.

Recognizing the role that emotions play in organizational life also has important implications for a wide range of organizational practices. If managers believe that employees should smile and be cheerful on the job, then tools for assessing and predicting the occurrence of such behaviors need to be developed. The literature on personnel selection at present offers very little help in determining whether a flight attendant or a salesperson will be friendly to their clients, especially during interactions with the 100th or 1000th client encountered. Knowledge about teaching, monitoring, and maintaining a given set of expressive behaviors is also limited. We are still unsure, for example, what to tell a manager who wants to ensure that all receptionists in his or her company will act friendly to customers. Along similar lines, it is equally difficult to determine what a manager at a bill collection agency can do to incite subordinates to act nasty toward delinquent debtors.

We believe that these are difficult and important questions for future research. We also believe that organizational researchers can answer them. If emotional dissonance and deviance prove to have little or no effect on well-being, then leaders need not worry about the damage wrought by implementing narrowly



defined display rules and by giving employees little discretion over their expressive behavior. If so, "only" the questions of selection, socialization, and maintaining such behaviors over long periods of time need to be addressed.

In contrast, however, if Hochschild is right, then enforcing such norms may come back to haunt leaders when employees experience mental and physical illness and when organizations pay the direct and indirect costs of the damage to individual well-being. Furthermore, managers and organizational researchers will have to scramble to detect which display rules can cause such damage and which do not.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our hope is that this chapter will guide and inspire additional theory building and testing on the expression of emotion in organizational life. We have sought to encourage such efforts through typical scholarly means. We argued that the topic was important. We defined the dimensions of expressive behavior. We described how this dependent variable is shaped by phenomena at three levels of analysis. We made proposals about the effects of such behavior on others. And in the discussion, we raised three of our most haunting doubts about the hazards of studying this subject and then offered (perhaps self-serving) arguments about why these are not severe threats to the study of expressed emotions in organizational settings.

In closing, we offer a less common reason why our colleagues—you, dear reader—might consider studying expressed emotions: IT IS INTERESTING. Studying this interesting topic has offered us some sweet rewards that other researchers may find appealing. We have taken so much pleasure from studying, writing, talking, and arguing about expressed emotions that we often forget that we were "working." We have also found that our colleagues and our students seem especially interested in hearing about research on expressed emotion. Frankly, they seem far more interested in hearing about expressed emotions than about our other research. And it is not only fun to talk about a topic that generates smiles and laughs. If Weick (1979) is right about the virtues of generating interest, then researchers who work on this topic may be rewarded by having their work remembered and used.

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ences. He is grateful for the financial support provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

## NOTES

1. It would be possible to develop literally hundreds of other proposals about the links between individual personality and demographic characteristics and expressed emotions. Examples include: (1) role occupants with high self-esteem are more likely to express positive emotions than those with low self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965); (2) role occupants with authoritarian personalities are more likely to be pleasant to superiors and unpleasant to subordinates than those who lack authoritarian personalities (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950); and (3) role occupants with a high need for social desirability are more likely to express positive emotions to all target persons than are role occupants with a low need for social desirability (Edwards, 1957). Indeed, it would be possible to develop one or more specific hypotheses for almost all of the hundreds of personality characteristics identified in the psychological literature. But our aim here is simply to illustrate that enduring attributes do influence emotions expressed in organizational life and to identify a few attributes that may be especially useful for subsequent research. We do not seek to propose a complete theory of the relationship between expressed emotions and enduring attributes of persons. Moreover, we would hesitate to embark on such an endeavor because it would probably result in an unparsimonious—and dreary—conceptual perspective.

2. We wish to thank Larry Cummings for suggesting this research strategy.

3. The new employee was generous enough to describe "Traditions I" in detail and to share her extensive notes. In addition, interested readers may wish to see Tyler and Nathan's (1985) film version of *In Search of Excellence*, which includes some entertaining and enlightening footage of "Traditions I." These norms are also spelled out in detail in the written training materials used by Disney (see Walt Disney Productions, 1982).

4. We wish to thank Gerald Ledford for suggesting this field stimulation.

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